

Mantell Again Puts Forward "King John"

By Charles Burnton.

THE actor who has been charged with the role of King John in the Forty-fourth Street Theatre has again put forward his play. Of his performance there is nothing more to say than was said six years ago, when he appeared in this historical play at the New Amsterdam Theatre. Mr. Mantell remained the same King John—ruddy in whisker and red in lip. But here and there along the rough road kings travelled in other times of war, he seemed to have grown a bit more human, as actors do, in this rather dreary Shakespearean system. No actor on earth, of course, could make this infamously arbitrary ruler vitally dramatic. We must accept King John, if we accept him at all on the stage, simply as an historical figure. To associate him with the present times is merely to reflect that England and France are no longer in arms against each other. Accordingly, I am not disposed to take up your time and patience, not to mention space that has its value, with a long parade of words in honor of the revival. Six years ago Mantell made short work of it and to-night Mr. Mantell turns to death.

To give the actor his due, however, Mr. Mantell put more interest than he did in his interview with Hubert when the murder of little Arthur was suggested. He spoke distinctly, and this in itself helped to improve a performance almost unintelligible in the beginning. He alone was not at fault in this respect. Other members of the company failed to make themselves clear.

I am only too glad to make exception, notably those of Fritz Lieber as Hubert, both of whom were excellent. More than this, real feeling was expressed over the body of Arthur. As for Mr. Mantell, he grew so steadily better that he died with honor. Florence Adams was a Constantine to win a special vote of sympathy, but she proved a bit extravagant, not to say noisy, in her own. Genevieve Hammer (Mrs. Mantell) was a fairly appealing figure.

The performance ran so smoothly that it was over at 11 o'clock—thereby breaking all Shakespearean records on Broadway.



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